

Volume 9/Issue 1  
Summer 2023

Covering the news of the United Steelworkers in District 11

# USW REPORTER

Bobcat  
Rogers, MN



## COMMON GOALS STRONGER VOICES

## Workers Win USW Representation Across District 11

Throughout District 11, workers in a variety of industries and services won important victories in union representation elections and choosing to become USW members.

In September 2022, workers at Bobcat's Bismarck, North Dakota, manufacturing facility voted in favor of union representation in a secret ballot election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez said the 700 Bobcat employees in Bismarck recognized that a strong union provides everyone with a voice on the job and empowers individual employees, who became closer as a group while organizing, to speak up.

"Bobcat workers deserve a fair union contract that provides fair pay and promotes a healthy work-life balance with limits on mandatory overtime and provisions for paid-

time-off," said Bobcat employee Jacob Klein.

The message caught on, as roughly 200 workers at Bobcat's Rogers, Minnesota, production facility voted for USW representation in a secret ballot election of their own on Tuesday, March 21, 2023.

"Every worker needs a strong voice on the job and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity by their employer," Ramirez said. "As USW members, Bobcat workers will have a strong advocate as we bargain for better pay, benefits and working conditions."

No matter the industry or sector, workers who are united in solidarity have a stronger voice on the job.

In February 2023, the USW welcomed 30 front-line first responders to the union, as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Advanced EMTs and paramedics from Frontier

Ambulance in Fremont County Wyoming, voted to join the USW.

"Fair pay and benefits will help retain loyal, experienced workers, and ensuring adequate staffing numbers will keep the plant running as safely and efficiently as possible," Ramirez said.

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Fairview Hospice and Homecare  
Hibbing, MN



## THE DIRECTOR'S DESK Emil Ramirez, District 11 Director

### Building and Growing District 11 in 2023

Welcome to the new USW District 11 Reporter! We have planned two editions with eight pages each in 2023 to share important news and updates from our wide variety of workplaces.

In this edition, we will share reports from educational and other activities that have taken place in USW District 11 since the last Reporter, included with Fall 2022 copies of USW@Work.

We will also take a look at some tremendous success we have had in District 11 organizing new members into the USW.

In September 2022, the 750 employees at Bobcat's Bismarck, N.D., manufacturing facility voted in favor of union representation.

I'm happy to announce that the bargaining committee there reached a tentative agreement with Bobcat during the week of July 10, and the membership voted to accept their first collective bargaining agreement on July 18, 2023.

The Bismarck organizing success was followed up by 200-plus employees at the Bobcat manufacturing facility in Rogers, Minn., voting in favor of USW representation.

The latest news on organizing activities in District 11 is that approximately 400 workers at Cleveland Cliffs' Northshore Mining operations in Silver Bay and Babbitt Minnesota elected to join the USW through card check, a process by which a simple majority of workers indicate their desire for a union.

We will also look at organizing successes we have had in the health care sector in both Wyoming and Minnesota in this issue.

We welcome all of the new members to USW District 11 and look forward to helping them to have a voice on the job.

If you have leads with the potential to organize a workplace, please call the District 11 office at the phone number on the back page of the Reporter.

Lastly, I hope you and your family have had a safe and enjoyable summer so far. We look forward to the challenges ahead, confident that the power of our solidarity will carry us onward, together.

## USW District 11 WOS Chart an Ambitious Course for 2023

*"She may look like a fragile flower but her stem is made of steel."* Jonny Ox

What an exciting six months into 2023 it has been for our Women of Steel program!

The ever-changing weather in the Midwest didn't slow things down. We kicked off the year with our annual International Women's Day celebration at our Iowa Women's Council meeting hosted by Local 105 in Bettendorf, Iowa, on March 8, 2023.

The theme this year was #EmbraceEquity... imagine a gender-equal world. We are working for a world free of bias, stereotypes or discrimination that is diverse, equitable and inclusive. We hope to build a world where differences are valued and celebrated. Together we can forge equality.

Over 40 sisters traveled through an April snowstorm to Cloquet, Minnesota, for the WI'MN-KOTA Women's

Council meeting hosted by Local 11-63. The sisters toured the Sappi Cloquet Mill on its 125th anniversary.

Our Mo-kan Women's Council meeting was held in Hesston, Kansas and hosted by Local 11228.

The sisters traveled from Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska to tour the AGCO plant and volunteer at the local public library where we assisted with setting up, sorting through and arranging books for the upcoming annual book sale.

This book sale supports their "All Together Now" summer program. This program's goal is two-fold: provide an "opportunity" for richness through continuing education and "equity" through being treated fairly and having access to all the same opportunities and services.

Each of these councils will hold one more meeting before the end of the year!

Has it been two years already? Yes sisters, it is time again for our District 11 Women's

Conference with the theme "Women of Steel, Know Your Power."

The conference will be held at The Northern Hotel in Billings, Montana, from July 27-29, 2023. We have a packed agenda of guest speakers, workshops and a public service project at Billings Parks and Recreation's Riverfront Park.

In addition to the busy schedule we have in District 11, the International Women's Conference will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 23-26, 2023.

For more information on USW and Women of Steel's programs and conferences, check out [usw.org](https://usw.org), and click on District 11.

You can also follow us on our USW District 11 WOS Facebook page.





# COMMON GOALS STRONGER VOICES

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At Fairview Range Medical Center in Hibbing, Minnesota, 35 homecare and hospice workers voted to join the USW on May 25, 2023.

The group includes registered nurses, physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, occupational therapists, social workers, case managers, home health aides, licensed practical nurses, workers in scheduling

and billing, and one chaplain.

The workers decided to organize to raise pay in order to attract and retain quality staff so their patients get the best care possible.

“Our patients have more acute need than even five years ago, and we have less and less workers to care for them,” said Sarah Lamppa, a social worker who spearheaded the union effort. “We need to draw in

quality workers who want to stay so our patients get the best care possible, and get our wages to a more competitive place.”

Ramirez recognized the tremendous work that District 11 staff and local unions contributed to supporting the workers in their organizing efforts, including members of USW Locals 560 and 9349 who assisted on the campaigns.

## MINK Educational Institute Provides Workshops for Local Leaders and Activists

**From June 4-9, 2023, in Lake Ozark, Mo., the USW hosted its Jerry Johnson Summer Educational Institute, also known as MINK (for Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas), at the Lodge of the Four Seasons.**

About 130 union members from the four states participated in training sessions that included USW Labor History, Grievance Handling, Building Rapid Response, Communications/Public Speaking, Safety and Health, Civil and Human Rights, FMLA, Local Union Officer Duties and Responsibilities, Legal and NLRB Update and Research Methods.

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez also gave an overview of news within the district to all in attendance. Members also received updates on Rapid Response, Women of Steel, the debt ceiling resolution and current facts and figures about the U.S. economy.

The week-long training ended with fourth-year MINK students participating in a mock arbitration. Some played the role of management advocates while others assumed the role of the union advocates.

Of course, in the end, the union won!

Thanks to all members who attended and a special thanks to all the instructors who participated.



# IRON RANGE VETERANS OF STEEL

## Serving and Working Together

Early this year, Daylan Evans, a Marine Corps veteran from USW Local 6860 in the auto/diesel apprenticeship at United Taconite was looking into using his G.I. Bill benefit.

He approached human resources with questions in January, and their reply was that they did not know anything about it.

Evans tried again in April through his immediate supervisor, who talked to the local HR, and he was told, "We don't do that here."

Frustrated, Evans emailed corporate HR in April. Local HR responded once again that United Taconite had no interest in helping Evans explore options to use his G.I. Bill benefits.

Finally, in May, Evans reached out to USW Local 6860 President, Jamie Winger, who put the Veterans of Steel Committee into action.

The committee contacted Ed Godfrey, an Education Specialist from the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, and learned more about the programs available with the G.I. Bill. Godfrey also contacted United Taconite's local HR.

With the help of the USW Local 6860 Veterans of Steel, the committee received a call from our local HR stating everything was "good to go" four days later. The persistence of the Veterans of Steel committee clearly made the company do what was right.



Pictured left to right: Edward Godfrey, State Approving Agent/MN G.I. Bill, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Ryan Gayno (1938), Nate Kenjalo (2705), Justin Klakoski (6115), Daylan Evans (6860), Dave Cherro (6860), Tim Mattson (1938), Jamie Winger (6860) and Wade Yuhala (2705).

This benefit added approximately \$1,400.00 per month to Evans' income. Knowing this motivated our committee to contact the other USW locals in our area to share this information.

Godfrey travelled to Eveleth and gave a presentation about the G.I. Bill and the benefits that are available to our veteran brothers and sisters.

We now have a monthly meeting with other USW locals for Veterans of Steel across the Iron Range to learn, share information and experiences to help better serve each other and our union.

## Veterans of Steel Coordinators Meet in Pittsburgh

**On June 22, 2023, Veterans of Steel coordinators from all districts met in Pittsburgh for a roundtable discussion on the state of the committee overall and to talk about plans moving forward to help the respective locals in creating and sustaining their own committees.**

Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer Chris Youngmark was the chair of the meeting, as President Conway was unable to attend.

While there is certainly enthusiasm from veterans all over our union, all districts have had challenges in getting this committee off the ground.

From the very beginning, President Conway has said that he would like this committee to grow from the ground up.

In District 11, there have been a number of groups who have taken their committees and began doing just that — growing their ranks and defining their own mission—advocating for our veteran members at work and advocating for veterans in our communities.

Our next steps in District 11 will be more concrete. We will hold a veterans' caucus at the District 11 Conference in Billings, Mt., on Aug. 2, 2023.

Veterans and veteran activists are encouraged to attend. This will be the time to discuss future meetings, our mission from the district level and local level and building our committees.

***The District 11 Coordinator's contact is below:***

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# “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela

A. F. Kojetinsky Memorial Scholarship and the A. F. Kojetinsky Vocational (Career) Education Scholarships are awarded to District 11 members, the children of a member, or the legal ward of a member of any local that is affiliated and per capita paid up with the United Steelworkers District 11 Welfare & Education Fund is eligible to participate. The Memorial Scholarship was developed to help students planning to pursue a four-year college degree and the Vocational (Career) Education Scholarship was developed for students who choose to pursue a career or technical training as opposed to a four-year college experience.

The scholarship is split into three regions that encompass all of the states within District 11. The Central Region includes Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. The Northern Region covers the state of Minnesota. The Southern Region includes the states of Kansas and Missouri.

***The winners of the 2023 A. F. Kojetinsky Memorial \$5,200 Scholarships awarded to members of participating Welfare & Education local unions are:***

## **SOUTHERN DISTRICT**

**Ellie Stewart** is the daughter of Brandon (Hoss) Stewart a member of Local Union 348. She is a 2023 graduate of Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School located in Wichita, Kansas.

## **CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Emily Sawyer** is the daughter of James Sawyer a member of Local Union 13214. She is a 2023 graduate of Evanston High School located in Evanston, Wyoming.

## **NORTHERN DISTRICT**

**Andrew Novack** is the son of Kenneth Novack, Jr. a member of Local Union 11-75. He is a 2023 graduate of Chisago Lakes Senior High School located in Lindstrom, Minnesota.

***The winners of the 2023 A. F. Kojetinsky Vocational \$2,600 Scholarships awarded to members of participating Welfare & Education local unions are:***

## **SOUTHERN DISTRICT**

**Zade Montgomery** is the son of Heath Maycumber a member of Local Union 14228. He is a 2023 graduate of Girard High School located in Girard, Kansas.

## **CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**Lily Walth** is the daughter of Jeremy and Tanya Walth who are both members of Local Union 560. She is a 2023 graduate of North Sargent High School located in Gwinner, North Dakota.

The Northern District did not have a completed application submitted for the 2023 deadline.

***District 11 would like to congratulate all of the winners and wish them luck in the future!***



**Ellie Stewart**



**Emily Sawyer**



**Andrew Novack**



**Zade Montgomery**



**Lily Walth**



## Taking Back Our Power!

The 2023 Rapid Response Legislative and Policy Conference was held in Washington, D.C., from June 11-14, at the Hyatt Capitol Hill hotel with 700 delegates in attendance.

**District 11 had 58 members and staff from 7 of our 9 states. Minnesota locals that attended included Local 662, 2002, 9230, 9349, 1938, 6115, 6860 and 2705. Iowa Locals 105 and 310L attended, as did Kansas Local 307L, as well as Montana Locals 443 and 11-0001. In addition, we welcomed members from North Dakota Local 560, Nebraska Local 286 and Missouri Local 11-937.**

Sunday was registration, and nearly 625 members came through to get all the materials that they would need for the next three days, including agendas, portfolios, name badges and t-shirts. It was quite a process, but we got it done.

Monday morning the conference began and we heard from USW Rapid Response Director Amber Miller, who welcomed everyone to the conference, as well as USW Secretary Treasurer John Shinn and Assistant to the International President Kim Miller.

Shinn swore in new officers. David Wasiura is the new Director of USW District 4, since Del Vitale announced he would be retiring, and Luis Mendoza is Vice President who will lead paper bargaining, since Leeann Foster is also retiring.

In the afternoon, members attended workshops on multiple topics to help understand the legislative process, such as “How a Bill Becomes a Law,” “How to Research Your Legislators” and many other subjects.

The afternoon general session was a discussion on “No Cuts to Retirement Security,” how Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid were being used as leverage during the debit ceiling debate and the impact defaulting on the national debt would have on workers and their families.



Tuesday kicked off with USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman moderating a panel discussion with Reps. Bill Johnson (Ohio) and Frank Mrvan (Indiana) on H.R 3882 and S. 186—together known as “The Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0,” and how this bill would help American workers by enforcing trade laws that address China and its plans to circumvent existing trade tariffs. We then had more workshops that were about different policy changes in our different sectors.

During the general sessions, the USW presented Wellstone Awards to two individuals—Sen. Tammy Baldwin from Wisconsin and Rep. Sanford Bishop from Georgia.

This award recognizes the dedication and accomplishments of public servants who exemplify Sen. Paul Wellstone’s commitment to our nation and the well-being of Steelworkers and their families. It also honors those who spend their lives advancing labor and human rights at home and around the world.

Wednesday was our “Day on The Hill,” when we went to our elected officials’ offices and met with them (or their staff) to discuss the top priority bills, and either thank them or encourage them to co-sign on to our bills, plus local issues.

Our lobbying asks this year were, Leveling the Playing Field 2.0, tax fairness for workers, the PRO Act and protecting our retirement security.

We had a total of 30 appointments throughout the day and broke into groups by states to meet with our representatives before heading back to the hotel to drop off our materials from the meetings.

***Next year’s conference will be May 19-22, 2024, in Washington, D.C.***



# EVERYBODY'S UNION EVERYWHERE

## District 11 Health Care Workers Participate in USW Events Across U.S.

**The 2023 USW Health and Safety Conference was held April 16-23 in Pittsburgh. Nine USW District 11 health care workers participated, representing three locals—USW Local 9230, USW Local 9349 and USW Local 9460.**

There were several classes and a demonstration that was health care-specific.

In Safe Patient Handling, Certified Nursing Assistant Stephanie Adams from Local 9230 had the opportunity to demonstrate upgraded lifts that assist elderly patients in nursing homes.

The "Standing Pal" prevents nursing assistants from work injuries by helping lift patients.

Health care workers also learned about an inflatable mattress and transport that helps patients back up and with minimal assistance from healthcare workers after a fall.

Eight USW health care workers from four different facilities with contracts due to expire this year participated in the 2023 District 11 Collective Bargaining Conference in Minneapolis.

During the conference, the participants learned about labor laws that impact us during collective bargaining with our employers.

Members also discussed how to collectively engage our membership during contract negotiations, keeping the members informed of what is happening at the table and observed a mock bargaining session.



In attendance at the USW Health and Safety Conference: Back row, left to right: Chad Longpre-Shepersky (9349); Marketa Anderson (9349); Cathy Drummond, Assistant to the Director, USW District 11; Emil Ramirez, Director, USW District 11; Stephanie Adams (9230); Tim Visna (9460); Kelli Ritz (9460). Seated, left to right: Debbie Witucki (9230), Jared Jank (9460), Crystal Duxbury (9230) and Renee Ledoux (9230). Not pictured Susan Thomas-Wagner.

A class about strategic campaigns focused on ways to engage the membership.

During the 2023 USW Rapid Response Conference, District 11 healthcare workers met with multiple Representatives to thank them for their support for the workplace violence bill.

Finally, eight members of the USW District 11 Health Care Workers Council met in late 2022 for education about Family Medical Leave and Workman's Compensation.

Debbie Prokopf, FMLA educator, explained that this is a federal job-protected (unpaid) leave for times of need when there is a serious health condition to care for ourselves or close loved ones.

The law impacts employers with 50 or more employees who must work 1,250 hours in a year to be eligible.



Certified Nursing Assistant Stephanie Adams from Local 9230 had the opportunity to demonstrate upgraded lifts that assist elderly patients in nursing homes.



Collective Bargaining Conference attendees: Left to right: Cathy Drummond, Assistant to the Director, USW District 11; Stephanie Bollum (9460) St. Luke's Hospital Technical Workers; Adria Molberg and Jared Jank (9460) Essentia Health Technical Workers; Billie Reid Tennison (9349) Essentia Health Northern Pines Medical Center Hospital Registered Nurses; Renee Ledoux and Debbie Witucki (9230) St. Otto's Nursing Home; Leah Panyan and Kathy Johnson (9349) Essentia Health Northern Pines Medical Center Hospital Registered Nurses.

District 11  
**REPORTER**

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# Bargaining Conference 2023

The USW District 11 Collective Bargaining Conference was held from April 24-26, 2023, in Bloomington, Minn. The conference hosted 53 delegates from local unions throughout the district, and they were provided the tools necessary to conduct local contract bargaining in the upcoming year.

The curriculum included courses in collective bargaining law and bargaining committee team training, as well as workshops on health and retirement benefits, research methods and an overview of "Building Power" for negotiating preparations.

At the evening reception, District 11 Director Emil Ramirez updated the attendees with a State of the District address. Sean Hayden and Brian Waddle also gave a presentation on the benefits to USW members and employers who participate in the Institute of Career Development (ICD) program.

The three-day conference concluded with the delegates participating in a mock negotiation.

## DISTRICT 11



## UPCOMING EVENT

**Ruttger's**  
September 10-15, 2023

## Let's Hear from YOU!

USW@Work is published four times a year and we need the submissions for the Fall 2023 issue by October 5, 2023. Please submit them to [D11news@usw.org](mailto:D11news@usw.org).

Also include a telephone number or active e-mail address in case we need additional information. We will try to include all submissions and we reserve the right to edit information in order to fit the allocated space.

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